



## FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

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# FTC Brings Action Against Debt Relief Operation that Targeted Financially Distressed Homeowners and Student Loan Borrowers

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FOR RELEASE

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The Federal Trade Commission has charged a debt relief operation with falsely representing to financially distressed homeowners and student loan borrowers that it would help get their mortgages and student loans modified. At the FTC's request, a federal court has temporarily halted the operation. The agency seeks to permanently stop the alleged illegal practices and obtain refunds for affected consumers.

According to the FTC's complaint, [Good EBusiness LLC](#), [using the name The AAP Firm, and Tobias West](#) deceptively marketed home loan modification services and illegally charged an advance fee of between \$1,000 to \$5,000. The agency alleges that the defendants falsely claim that they can lower consumers' monthly mortgage payments, often quoting a specific amount, and reduce their mortgage interest rates, usually within a few months, and falsely promise full refunds if they fail. They told consumers, many of whom were current on their mortgage payments, to stop making payments to, and communicating with, their lenders during the purported loan restructure process, without providing disclosures required by the Mortgage Assistance Relief Services Rule (MARS Rule) and Regulation O, according to the complaint.

The FTC's complaint also alleges that Good EBusiness, using the names Student Loan Help Direct and Select Student Loan; [Select Student Loan Help LLC](#); [Select Document Preparation Inc.](#); and Tobias West and his wife, Komal West, illegally charged an advance fee of \$500 to \$800 for purported student loan relief services. According to the complaint, the defendants falsely told financially distressed borrowers – including some who were at risk of delinquency or default and already subject to seizure of their tax refunds or wage garnishment – that they would renegotiate, settle or alter payment terms on their student loan debt, and remove tax liens and wage garnishments, or they would fully refund the fees if they failed.

Good Ebusiness and Tobias West are charged with violating the FTC Act and the MARS Rule/Regulation O. All of the defendants are charged with violating the FTC Act and the Telemarketing Sales Rule.

To learn more, read [Home Loans](#) and [Student Loans](#).

The Commission vote approving the complaint was 4-0. The U.S. District Court for the Central District of California entered a temporary restraining order against the defendants on February 16, 2016.

**NOTE:** The Commission files a complaint when it has "reason to believe" that the law has been or is being violated and it appears to the Commission that a proceeding is in the public interest. The case will be decided by the court.

The Federal Trade Commission works to promote competition, and protect and educate consumers. You can learn more about consumer topics and file a consumer complaint online or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357). Like the FTC on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, read our blogs and subscribe to press releases for the latest FTC news and resources.

## Contact Information

### MEDIA CONTACT:

Frank Dorman  
*Office of Public Affairs*  
202-326-2674

### STAFF CONTACT:

Eleanor Durham  
*FTC Northwest Region*  
206-220-4476

